

Arminianism in the Lord's Assembly: Glasgow, 1638¹

DAVID G. MULLAN, B.A., Ph.D

In the year or so leading up to the General Assembly at Glasgow in November 1638, there were indications of discontent about a doctrinal drift in the kirk. In fact rumblings had been heard since the 1620s, and while none of the presbyterian historians attempted a “history of Arminianism”, they reported scattered manifestations of the error. After the introduction of the Prayer Book in July 1637, those concerns were heightened, and a persistent problem in handling this issue is that doctrine and liturgy are more or less inextricable. A careful consideration of the theological state of Scotland in the 1630s lies beyond the scope of this essay;² we may, however, make the observation that Scottish Arminianism had generally very little to do with Arminius, and a great deal to do with the sacramental grace implied in ceremonies and liturgy. The author of a contemporary pamphlet entitled “Jeshurun, or a people once right going wrong in the service of God made manifest by the new order of the communion” complained about the service book’s “tares of heresie, superstition and idolatrie and antichristian tyrannie,” the corruption of ministers and “arminianisme in the point of grace”.³ George Gillespie also associated the varied strands of objectionable religion: “And who can be ignorant,

¹ “the lords assembly” – see National Library of Scotland [NLS], Wodrow MSS. quarto cvi, “Edinburgh presbytery against William Wishart,” fo. 166r. The author wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance of the University College of Cape Breton in the preparation of this essay.

² See my essay “Theology in the Church of Scotland 1618-c.1640: A Calvinist Consensus?”, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26 (1995), 595-617, in which I attempt to address the problem of defining the content of Scottish Arminianism.

³ Edinburgh University Library [EUL], Laing MSS. 1, 293, p.1. On Jeshurun see Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26. This unfamiliar name is a form of “Israel,” “perhaps best taken to be a hypocoristicon [i.e., an endearing name] from the name Israel, occurring only in poetry, and conceivably intended to emphasize the root meaning, ‘upright’.” G.E. Mendenhall, “Jeshurun,” *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols. (New York, 1962-76), ii, 868.

what a large spread, Poperie, Arminianisme, and reconciliation with Rome, have taken among the Arch-urgers of the Ceremonies [i.e. the Five Articles of Perth]?”⁴ Among the preludes to the Glasgow assembly were a number of complaints prepared for submission detailing corruptions in the kirk, particularly its episcopal hierarchy. In fact, the covenanting leadership solicited reports of erroneous doctrine. The “Letter of Instructions sent to presbyteries, 28 Aug 1638” noted

the doctrine, once pure amongst us, now corrupted by Arminianisme and Popish errouris, the teachers thereof these sundry yeires bygane rewarded and preferred, quhen the faithful and peaceable pastoris wer censured and thurst from their places; ...⁵

One such memorial presented to Edinburgh presbytery in October 1638, among whose subscribers was the old hammer of bishops William Scot, minister of Cupar in Fife, animadverted against David Lindsay, bishop of Edinburgh, and his colleagues. It was alleged that they “have taught erroneous and corrupt doctrines themselves, ... and they cherish and maintaine them who teach Arminianisme and Popery”, defined in terms of the familiar doctrines touching matters of grace and also the moderate reflections of William Forbes and James Wedderburn on Rome.⁶ A leading itinerant propagandist for the covenant, Andrew Cant, pointed his finger at the universities, as had been done in the preceding years, warning students to “take heed what Sort of Learning and Traditions ye drink in, and so hold your Garments clean. We hear of too many Colleges in the Land, that are spotted; but we hope in God that ye are yet clean....”⁷ Likewise James Row’s *Red-shankes sermon*

⁴ [George Gillespie,] *A dispute against the English-popish ceremonies, obtruded upon the Church of Scotland* (Leiden, 1637), sig. A4r.

⁵ R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals [RBLJ]*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1841-2), i, 471.

⁶ *Records of the Kirk of Scotland [RKS]*, ed. A. Peterkin (Edinburgh, 1838), 97.

⁷ A. Cant, “A sermon preached after the renovation of the National Covenant, and celebration of the Lord’s Supper, at Glasgow, Anno 1638”, in *A collection of*

declared that the kirk “is wounded in her heart, which is by the doctrine of the Kirk through the abundance of Popery and Arminianisme, now common in our Kirks and Schooles.”⁸

At the Glasgow assembly, a number of bishops and ministers were accused of Arminianism. Historians have tended to generalise about these trials; two somewhat fuller analyses lie in the relative obscurity of unpublished theses. The first of these, by Michiel Kitshoff, gives a useful survey of the printed sources and concludes that “Arminianism did appear in Scotland, and although it was at its beginning like a little cloud, it grew rapidly and was one of the elements causing the storm at the General Assembly in Glasgow.”⁹ In fact, Kitshoff claimed, I think incorrectly, that the assembly was less anti-episcopal than it was “resolutely anti-Arminian.” The second thesis is George I. R. McMahon’s study of the Scottish episcopate from 1600 to the revolution. He reviews the materials and states: “Certainly the charges made by the covenanters were highly inflated.”¹⁰ In this essay a detailed study of the accusations will be made in an attempt to explore the substance of Arminianism in Scotland at the inception of the National Covenant. But first it may prove of value to consider what was said about Arminianism at the assembly.

Four Presbyterians addressed the issue – Alexander Henderson, whose performance as moderator was somewhat enigmatic; David Dickson; Andrew Cant; and Robert Baillie. The words of the first three are to be found in various reports of assembly proceedings; in addition to those sources, Baillie’s speech was printed in 1641.

Henderson and Baillie recognised the “British” context of what was called Arminianism in Scotland. Henderson stated that

several remarkable and valuable speeches and exhortations at renewing and subscribing the National Covenant of Scotland (Glasgow, 1741), 45.

⁸ [James Row,] *The red-shankes sermon: preached at Saint Giles Church in Edinburgh, the last Sunday in April, by a highland minister* (London, 1642), sig. A2v.

⁹ M.C. Kitshoff, “Aspects of Arminianism in Scotland” (M.Th. thesis, St Andrews, 1967), 108.

¹⁰ G.I.R. McMahon, “The Scottish Episcopate 1600-1638” (Ph.D. thesis, Birmingham, 1972), 260.

There are two sortes of Arminianisme. One is that which hes troubled the Low Countries, and hath spread itselfe so farr, and that is nothing but the way to Socinianisme, and *Socinianismus inchoatus* is *Arminianismus consociatus*. Certainlie no man that will consider aright of the poyntes of Arminianisme, but he will see more nor the seids and grossnesse of Socinianisme. There is ane uther Arminianisme mentioned by some in England, and uthers in Scotland, and that runs in ane uther way – it runs to Papistrie, and is *inchoatus Papismus*....¹¹

Baillie concurred, but added that the bifurcation of Arminianism was providential, for without this confusion in Babel, the reformed churches might have been totally subverted.¹²

Dickson defined the four errors of the Arminians: in election where a person might refuse God; in universal atonement where anyone might stand but also, by implication, all might fall; in human free will, wanting “to make man to be no stock nor block”,¹³ but diverting the glory of conversion thereby from God to the individual; in perseverance where no assurance might be provided. In place of these perversions Dickson proposed what he thought was the clear message of the Bible: that election was entirely of God, though not to the prejudice of human free will; it was unconditional, without reference to foreseen good works; it was directed toward specific individuals; and once granted in eternity, it was efficacious, so that Christ

is sure to find out the man to persuade and convert, to lead him through touches and temptations, through fears and falls, till

¹¹ RKS, 155.

¹² R. Baillie, *An antidote against Arminianisme* (London, 1641), 18-20.

¹³ Cf. Arminius in C. Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*, 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids, 1985), 195: “a stock or a stone”.

he bring him to peace; and this refuge of the soule is a sufficient post against all Arminians doubts.¹⁴

Ramsay condemned the notion of foreseen good works and any intrusion of human will into the matter of salvation. Clearly he was of the opinion that Arminianism was Pelagianism, denying the role of divine grace in salvation: “and we have the consent of all the antients, and the whole Roman Kirk, (till of new some Jesuits hes risen up,) that our election depends on Gods grace.” Baillie too identified Arminius’s errors with those of “our old Countryman Pelagius”, but he also recognised that Arminius should be distinguished from his followers, even allowing that he was “a man of very great ingine, in his outward conversation almost unblameable, but much given to Innovation and self conceit.” The eponymous founder of the sect had made only faith, and not good works,¹⁵ anterior to election; others had added works and perseverance in faith and works. Baillie restated the reformed position that “our Election hath no Antecedent cause, condition, or good quality on our part, but flows meerly from Gods good pleasure, and mercy looking upon us.”¹⁶ He also allowed that Arminius did not abandon the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; that perfidy was likewise left to his disciples.

Before these speeches were uttered, and just before Hamilton, the king’s commissioner, walked out of the assembly, the moderator engaged in a problematical debate with Walter Balcanquhall, a deracinated Scot, royal chaplain, an “extra” Jacobean delegate to Dort, and now dean of Rochester.¹⁷ The debate is too complex to analyse in detail here, but a few comments are in order. Henderson and others of his faction believed that Balcanquhall said Dort dealt with matters fundamental to the faith. Balcanquhall denied saying that, but more

¹⁴ RKS, 159. Also in *Select Biographies*, ed. W.K. Tweedie, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1845-7), ii, 17-27.

¹⁵ Baillie, *Antidote*, 7, 34.

¹⁶ Baillie, *Antidote*, 25.

¹⁷ W.R. Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism: The Debate on the Atonement at the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619” (Ph.D. thesis, Stanford, 1974), 167-179.

interesting is Henderson's blurring of the notion: "it was a questione of great difficultie, to decerne what pointes are fundamentall and what not; and, if this whole Assembly were sett to it, it would take them to the morrow at this tyme."¹⁸ Was the moderator therefore "soft" on Arminianism? Indeed Henderson's remark about the non-fundamental nature of the Arminian points was rather a surprise to many who had expected a different opinion, especially those who might have listened to him only months earlier, when he sermonised about the need for rejection of all error in theology, since every error is connected to others.

If we receive but one, and open the port to it, there is a multitude at the back thereof; so that if the first be not gainstood, it holds the way open for all the rest, and they come in. As is evident in the point of free-will; anes admit free-will in the kirk, and then follows, that there is no election of the free grace of God; that there is no certainty of our election; it admits universality of election, a resistance by us of the strongest working of the grace of God, no perseverance in whatever estate we be here. And sicklike, in the point of justification by inherent righteousness; anes admit that, and it presupposes preparation to be in us for justification, a perfection of good works, meriting by good works, denying of the certainty of faith, and so denying the work of God. And this is evident to be true also in the matters of the government of the kirk.¹⁹

¹⁸ RKS, 142. See also J. Corbet, *The ungirding of the Scottish armour* (Dublin, 1639), 48.

¹⁹ A. Henderson, *Sermons, Prayers, and Pulpit Addresses*, 1638, ed. R. Thomson Martin (Edinburgh, [1867]), 49, 50. In his *A sermon preached to the honourable house of commons 27 December 1643* (London, 1644), 23-4, he left no doubt about his opinion. In words highly reminiscent of those from the 1638 sermon, he said: "Although it be true, that some things in Religion be fundamentall, and absolutely necessary unto salvation, and other things not so, yet to be obstinate against revealed truth, or to mis-regard or despise smallest matters of Religion, which are

Balcanquhall suggested that the moderator's remarks stemmed only from the need to say something and he added that, whatever Henderson's opinion,

there were many Ministers members of the Assembly, who did hold them to bee fundamentall points, & most unchristianly and uncharitably had preached, that the Remonstrants tenets did destroy the very foundation of faith; and whosoever sided with them in the five Articles, could not possibly bee saved.²⁰

Baillie was one that wondered at Henderson's opinion. He, too, thought that Balcanquhall had affirmed that the Remonstrants' positions did impinge upon fundamentals, and then complained that Henderson

took too much libertie to discourse (of that he professed had been his late studie) of poynts fundamentall and preter-fundamentall: as the Doctor was rash to make all the articles of Arminius' errors fundamentall; so I thought the Moderator als incircumspect to absolve all the Arminian errors, without a distinction[,] of the cryme of heresie.²¹

Nevertheless, in correspondence with his cousin John Crichton of Paisley, Baillie had stated: "That anie does pronounce the doctrine of a conditionall praedestination an haeresie I know not."²² He was ready to

necessarie to be received, if not for themselves, yet for the authoritie of Scripture, (as some make the distinction) bringeth as certain a curse and condemnation, as ignorance and errour doth in matters more substantiall." See also my essay "'Uniformity in Religion': The Solemn League and Covenant (1643) and the Presbyterian Vision", in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W.F. Graham (Kirksville, Missouri, 1994), 263.

²⁰ Charles I, *A large declaration concerning the late tumults in Scotland* (London, 1639), 274.

²¹ *RBLJ*, i, 139. "Preter-fundamental" means less than fundamental, hence not quite of the essence of the faith. For a clear use of the term, see R. Baillie, *A large supplement of the Canterburian self-conviction* ([London], 1641), 36.

²² New College, Edinburgh, Baillie MSS. i, "A conference by letters with a Canterburian minister," 59.

apply the term to Romanists,²³ but the Arminians, and especially Arminius, while in “grosse error,” had not crossed that line, which Vorstius and Socinus had. Actually, not all Covenanters referred to Arminians as heretics, or at least some did not blanket all Arminian tenets with that term of odium.²⁴ Not that the distinction made much difference to the treatment of these men in Scotland, unless a renowned Vorstian might have got himself burned at a Scottish stake.

Henderson and the others thought Balcanquhall had made a distinction: on the one hand, Dort had dealt with matters of fundamental importance for the Christian faith; while on the other hand, Glasgow, with its obsessive interest in episcopacy, was treating something of lesser significance. One way or another – and there are issues here to be sorted out on another occasion – Henderson ended up by putting the two contentious issues (doctrine of grace and church polity) on a single plane. In other words, Henderson claimed the *jus divinum* for presbyterian polity with the corollary that any offence against it was a contravention of God’s law. No Arminian error could be more fundamental than this breach.²⁵ Henderson was looking beyond the doctrinal problems associated with the term Arminian, and this is not surprising, for Presbyterians had long identified bishops as the surpassing problem for the kirk – they were the conduit of its various woes.

When Balcanquhall later wrote up his report and reflections on the proceedings of 1638, he chided the assembly for depriving ministers for

²³ *Ibid.*, fo. 61: “If you think all this in the Remonstrants grosse error, as I doe, I hope you will be plaine, and upon your disclaiming of it we may proceede to Papists, whither they be proper haereticks or not.” See also Baillie’s *A parallel or briefe comparison of the liturgie with the masse-book* (London, 1641), 90, 94, from “A compend of the preceding treatise, in a speech at the generall assembly of Glasgow, 1638.”

²⁴ A.L. Drummond, *The Kirk and the Continent* (Edinburgh, 1956), 118.

²⁵ NLS, Wodrow MSS., octavo x, “Mr Robert Douglas account of the Assemblys 1638 & 1639,” fo. 82r-v. Actually the 1639 material is not of the General Assembly of that year, but of the meetings of the Edinburgh Commission dealing with charges against ministers.

maintaining a doctrine which had never been condemned by the kirk, other than perhaps in very general terms. However, in the end, whatever contentions might have been offered, “they would deprive Ministers for holding them [Arminian tenets], before they themselves [members of assembly] had condemned them.”²⁶ Despite the fact that there was no authenticated Scottish representative in attendance, “the venerable Assemblie at Dort”²⁷ bore unquestioned authority with the Presbyterians. As G. D. Henderson noted, its decrees were always highly regarded; indeed, “it is obvious that it was vaguely thought of as having been a Protestant Ecumenical Council.”²⁸ It was in this context that Baillie contributed to the myth of good King James, at whose behest the synod was called: “But there the pity, Britain whose waters mainly had slakened that fire abroad, began at once to be scorched at home by some sparks of that flame.”²⁹ The missing act of assembly was a formality of no significance to the Covenanters. The General Assembly at Glasgow now had an opportunity similar to that of Dort: “the great Hammer that brake the necke of the beast over Sea, was that Nationall Synod and the mayn hope we have to get it mastered here at this time is by the hand of our God in this present Assembly.”³⁰

With the assembly freed from any further inhibitions by Hamilton’s departure, it proceeded to discharge its duty of purging the kirk of thirty years of ungodly accretions in polity, ceremonies, and doctrinal deviation as well. As Baillie wrote in his retrospective:

since we did finde the articles of Arminius, with many poynts of the grossest poperie, in the books, in the preachings, and in the discourses of our bishops and ministers, we were resolved to have these doctrines censured as they did deserve, without

²⁶ *Large declaration*, 320.

²⁷ *The principall acts of the solemne generall assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, 1638* (Edinburgh, 1639), “To the Reader.”

²⁸ G.D. Henderson, “Scotland and the Synod of Dort,” in *Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Cambridge, 1937), 87; “Arminianism in Scotland,” *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* [157] (1932), 493.

²⁹ Baillie, *Antidote*, 13, 15.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 21-2.

any sparing for respect to any person who did maintain them.³¹

The assembly was a gathering of 42 ministers and 98 ruling elders.³² The former would generally have possessed at least a modicum of theological competency; the “lay” elders and those others at home who had complained about their pastors inspire less confidence about their abilities in these deep points of religion. Thus we will not be surprised to learn that there were allegations of incompetence among the witnesses.

G.D. Henderson once made third-hand reference to a document which disparaged, *inter alios*, Andrew Cant.³³ By not tracing back to the original source, Henderson missed the fact that the document, *An account of the proceedings of the General Assembly at Glasgow, 1638*,³⁴ is a satire of unknown origin, and a quite impressive one at that. The tone is one of unmitigated mockery, both Alexander Henderson and Cant being made the objects of sexual humour. Cant’s “autobiography” also has him declare that “Popery, Arminianism, and the Alcoran, are all alike known to me.”

It is this satirical theme of deplorable ignorance at the Glasgow assembly that is of particular interest to us. Another episode in the satire cast a scornful light on the ruling elder, focussing on one supposedly from Forfar, a shoemaker by trade. He stood up and claimed full authority to address the weighty issues at hand, and promptly confused Arianism and Arminianism. He recalled a business trip to Holland, during which time Barneveld met his end. “I asked what was the Fault? They said he was found guilty of Arminianism and Treason against the State: So in my Judgment, Arminianism is Treason against the covenant, and deserves to be punished with Death.” When

³¹ *RBLJ*, i, 119.

³² G. Donaldson, *Scotland: James V - James VII* (Edinburgh, 1965), 321.

³³ G.D. Henderson, *Religious Life*, 89; *Scottish Notes and Queries*, iii (1889-1890), 84; *A Third Book of Scottish Pasquils* (Edinburgh, 1828), 47-48.

³⁴ (n.p., 1724.)

the earl of Loudon tried to explain some of the complex issues involved, he failed badly. "Yet altho' Arminianism was not well understood by the greatest of these who had el[e]ctive Voices, it was condemned as Heresy, because it was condemned of the Council of Dort."³⁵

Concern over the ignorance of delegates may be readily authenticated from more reliable sources. According to James Gordon, parson of Rothiemay, the assembly demonstrated its approbation of one of the learned addresses on Arminianism, and in particular, the majority of the ruling elders,

with a devoute ignoraince, applauded thes deep poyntes with ane implicite faithe, although many doubted if all of them understood either the Arminian tenents, or the refutatorye argumentes therof: But that was all one, they wer sure to saye with the reste.³⁶

Before the assembly met, Baillie noted that William Ogston of Colinton, while undoubtedly guilty of many faults, had spoken on the virgin Mary; but the peoples' complaints were unnecessary, there being nothing wrong in the sentiments expressed.³⁷ In James Auckinleck's case he was concerned about those involved in the investigation who, being of limited understanding in the matter of Arminianism, "thought every thing here capitall heresie."³⁸ Robert Rollock had the audacity to tell the 1639 General Assembly that his accusers were "ignorant

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

³⁶ J. Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs, from 1637 to 1641*, 3 vols. (Aberdeen, 1841), ii, 47.

³⁷ *RBLJ*, i, 76. He also complained about certain allegations concerning Baron, Forbes, and Panter: they "were stark nought, and very unworthie the authors," 94. When it came to the personal faults alleged against some, he could be found sceptical, as in the matter of "a vile dance of naked people in his own house," 164. On the other hand, he accepted the accusation of adultery against Bishop Whitford as "probable" on the basis of a rather doubtful witness, 155. See Gordon, *History*, ii, 101; and McMahon, "Scottish Episcopate", 260. But Baillie was dismayed by Balcanquhall's aspersions on the ignorance of assembly delegates. Robert Baillie, *Ladensium autokatakrisis, the Canterburian self-conviction* ([Edinburgh], 1640), 12.

³⁸ *RBLJ*, i, 153.

men.”³⁹ In the same year one of the charges against the *Large declaration* was that it complained about the witnesses in the case of David Mitchell: they were all laymen and were “of such mean and ordinarie understanding, as that it was improbable, if not impossible, that they should understand the doctrines that he was charged with.”⁴⁰ Burnet claimed that some of the commissioners to assembly were illiterate, “and yet these were to judge of Heresie, and condemn Arminius his points. All depended on a few that were more Learned and Grave, who gave Law to the rest.”⁴¹

Hamilton’s speech on 29 November 1638, by which he intended to prorogue the assembly, similarly drew attention to the enormity of allowing new-fangled ruling elders to have a say in casting people out of the church through excommunication (without being allowed to admit to the church through baptism), and especially in such difficult matters as the disputed Arminian points:

... the high and deep Mysteries of Predestination, of the Universality of Redemption, of the Sufficiency of Grace given, or not given to all men, of the Resistibility of Grace, of total and final Perseverance, or Apostasie of the Saints, of the Antilapsarian or Postlapsarian Opinion, of Election and Reprobation ...⁴²

He also chided Henderson for reading Latin texts to the assembly (the judgement of the English delegates to Dort and a harmony of confessions), since his words would be incomprehensible and therefore

³⁹ RKS, 259.

⁴⁰ RKS, 268, citing *Large declaration*, 206. See also Baillie, *Ladensium autokatakrisis*, 12-13, and [John Maxwell,] *The burthen of Issachar* ([London], 1646), 21.

⁴¹ G. Burnet, *Memoirs of the lives and actions of James and William dukes of Hamilton* (London, 1677), 98.

⁴² RKS, 116. See also Corbet, *Ungirding of the Scottish armour*, 56 and [George Gillespie,] *An assertion of the government of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1641), 137.

beyond the judgement of a great many of the ruling elders: "which the Moderatour passed over with a smile."⁴³

It is not always clear what one should make of accusations of Arminianism. When theological passions are aroused, weird charges may be the result. Glasgow witnessed its share of unsubstantiated and curious accusations, and the reader must approach the material with a considerable degree of scepticism. Even where charges are specific and intelligible, what was regarded as the basis for allegations of Arminianism might have been no more than an unguarded word, spoken perhaps in private, rather than a fully developed theology defended publicly with conviction. One would like to know far more about personal animosities at the local level – jealousies and old scores – which may have egged on the various processes. An example is the case of Henry Scrymgeour who, upon repentance, would have been continued in his parish, had the moderator had his way. But two of the local lairds insisted otherwise, and Henderson had to submit to the man's deposition, to be followed by placement elsewhere, upon satisfaction being made.⁴⁴ One wonders whether the 1639 accusation of affirming that "the Nobles were taking the crowne off the Kings head to sett on their owne" was a cause or an effect of the laird's hostility.⁴⁵ Baillie was also scornful of Lord Lindsay who sought the deposition, and apparently gained at least the departure, of George Haliburton, minister of Craill, for nothing more than a rather forgiveable irregularity surrounding the "church-boxe;" the real reason for the hostility may have been Haliburton's failure to gain Lindsay's patronage prior to entry.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Large declaration*, 273.

⁴⁴ *RKS*, 182; *RBLJ*, i, 168. It does not appear that he was ever given another charge. He died in England. The satire attributed the process against Mitchell not to Arminianism but "a private quarrel" between him and Rothes. *An account of the proceedings*, 16.

⁴⁵ *RKS*, 260.

⁴⁶ *RBLJ*, i, 153; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, edd. H. Scott et al., 10 vols. (Edinburgh, 1915-81), v, 193.

The bishops were generally reputed to be Arminians.⁴⁷ Specifically, Archbishop Spottiswood of St Andrews was “proven to be guiltie of adulterie, drunkennes, preaching of Arminianisme and Papisticall doctrine.”⁴⁸ Apart from his unhappy enforcement of the five articles of Perth and support for episcopacy, the only evidence to support the allegation is his statement to the Perth assembly in 1618 that he would go half-way to reconciling with papists if they would abandon their idolatry.⁴⁹ James Wedderburn, bishop of Dunblane, was held guilty of all the usual episcopal crimes, viz., Arminianism, popery, and drunkenness. The first was arguably a just statement;⁵⁰ the second could not be accepted by an unprejudiced arbiter; the third cannot be substantiated and is best ignored.⁵¹ Thomas Sydserff, bishop of Galloway, was convicted of unlawful exercise of office (“breach of the Caveats”), Popery (including devotional use of a crucifix), Arminianism, “and many grosse personall faults.”⁵² As for these latter concerns, Gordon stated that besides swearing in anger, the assembly held him accountable only for the fact “that he called his horse Puritane, who would doe nothing without beating.”⁵³ David Lindsay of Edinburgh was not accused of Arminianism, but among the charges

⁴⁷ RKS, 142; see also 97, and *A short relation of the state of the kirk of Scotland* ([Edinburgh,] 1638), sig. B3v.

⁴⁸ RKS, 166.

⁴⁹ [David Calderwood,] *Perth assembly* (n.p., 1619), 7; RKS, 162.

⁵⁰ D.G. Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland: The History of an Idea, 1560-1638* (Edinburgh, 1986), 170-1.

⁵¹ RKS, 45.

⁵² RKS, 165-6; RBLJ, i, 153-4; Gordon, *History*, ii, 29-30n. It is worth remembering that Sydserff supplied the *Vita* for the publication of W. Forbes' *Considerationes* in 1658. Robert Burnet, who married the sister of Archibald Johnston of Wariston's wife, would later claim that Sydserff's “excommunication was not for any crime, but *par raison d'état seulement*.” See D. Dalrymple, *Memorials and Letters relating to the History of Britain in the Reign of Charles the First* (Glasgow, 1766), 74. Baillie's was among four votes against the sentence of excommunication.

⁵³ Gordon, *History*, ii, 29-30, note.

was one that he countenanced and connived at “corrupt doctrine preached in Edinburgh.”⁵⁴ John Maxwell of Ross was sentenced for liturgical and personal faults. Baillie said that his trial “was no wayes perfect; the long legend of his erroneous doctrines was cleane omitted,” as the report came to hand too late, but the accusation is supported by Gordon who said that Maxwell and his coterie were quite public in their defence of popery and Arminianism.⁵⁵ In later years Maxwell would in fact write disparagingly of presbyterian doctrine about political sovereignty:

If this be not to seat themselves upon the Tribunall of God, who hath reserved as peculiar to himselfe, to judge and discover mens hearts and intentions, I know not what else can be it, except it be that those Seraphicall Doctors make so bold with Almighty God to unfold the secrets of predestination, and to define who are the Elect, who the Reprobate.⁵⁶

These five were both deposed and excommunicated. James Fairley of Argyll was dealt with rather leniently, and he ultimately did satisfaction so that he was never excommunicated. Baillie, however, said that he had preached Arminian tenets and had begun “to doe all that Canterburie could have wished;”⁵⁷ his favouring the doctrine of universal grace was regarded by some as a means of gaining preferment, in that he had previously been of another opinion.⁵⁸ John Guthrie of Moray was not mentioned for Arminianism at Glasgow, but Gordon alleged that he “had suffered one Mr. Johne Peter [St Andrews Kirkton in Moray presbytery] to teache Arminianisme.”⁵⁹

One anonymous bishop responded that allegations of Arminianism and popery were “a most calumnious lye,” rehearsing the allegations of

⁵⁴ RBLJ, i, 160; Gordon, *History*, ii, 132.

⁵⁵ RBLJ, i, 161; Gordon, *History*, i, 136.

⁵⁶ J. Maxwell, *Sacro-sancta regum majestas* (Oxford, 1644), 105; see R. Baillie, *An historicall vindication of the government of the Church of Scotland* (London, 1646), 6.

⁵⁷ RBLJ, i, 164.

⁵⁸ Gordon, *History*, ii, 142.

⁵⁹ Gordon, *History*, ii, 139. Peter was the bishop’s chaplain.

theological incompetence with which we are already familiar. He denied the teaching of either in churches or in schools,⁶⁰ and of course, it might have been true that none had read Arminius's writings or was conscious of any debt to him at all; but the charges might be made to stick to the Covenanters' satisfaction if only because the episcopal office itself entailed acceptance of the service book which was more than enough to generate suspicions of theological error. The Scottish bishops were not writers like their English peers; they did not leave behind extensive works such as did Cosin and Laud, and the lack makes the historian's task a difficult one and his conclusions somewhat tentative. It would appear, nevertheless, that in addition to Wedderburn, four others, Maxwell, Sydserff, Lindsay, and Fairley were very likely in the Arminian camp, even if for Fairley that meant only one foot in. Spottiswood probably went which ever way ambition dictated. That was now in the Arminian direction and it was into Maxwell's hands that he committed his manuscripts; he also recommended that Maxwell succeed him as primate.⁶¹ The suspicion of Guthrie is simply too slight to build a case upon. What is significant in the case of the first four is the wider influence they were able to exercise, so that they were seen as the captains of groups of ministers inclining in an erroneous direction.

A number of other ministers, some prominent, others obscure, were also accused of Arminianism. David Mitchell of Edinburgh had gained for himself a reputation as an "avowed armenian" imbued with "many dangerous opinionones;"⁶² he was deprived for maintaining the doctrine of

⁶⁰ "... I doubt much if this reasoner [author of *Reasons for a generall assemblie*] wer put to it, if he could tell what wer arminius tenets. Of this I am certaine that manie have arminius in there mouth who never knew what his doctrine wes." NLS, Wodrow MSS., folio lxvi, "A reply to the reasons for a generall assemblie," fo. 73v; *Reasons for a generall assemblie* (n.p., 1638), sig. A3v.

⁶¹ J. Spottiswood, *History of the Church of Scotland*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1847-51), i, p. cxxxiii.

⁶² Scottish Record Office [SRO], GD 406/1/986, Traquair to Hamilton, 10 Feb. 1639, fo. 3. Reference in P. Donald, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish Troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge, 1990), 124.

the Remonstrants: "he defends universall grace, resistabilitie of Grace – efficacie of Christs death – apostacie of the Saints; so he is convict of heresie...."⁶³ Alexander Gledstanes, archdeacon of St Andrews,⁶⁴ accused of Arminianism, was subsequently deprived, having fallen from good character and reputation into drunkenness and other faults: "Rome Pagan could not have suffered such a beastlie man to have remained a priest even to Bacchus."⁶⁵ Dr Patrick Panter, master of New College, St Andrews, and professor of divinity there from 1627, was accused in 1638 and dealt with the next year "for his erroneous doctrine taught to his schollars, found in his Note Bookes."⁶⁶ Baillie thought him among the best of contemporary poets and admired his "bonny spirit," but regretted the man's "Popish justification" and "the grossest Pelagianisme in originall sin, let be in other points of Arminianisme."⁶⁷ In addition to inherent righteousness, he had taught the real presence, the *limbus patrum*, and "Converting aff the nots of

⁶³ RKS, 160; see also 44, 155; RBLJ, i, 148; SRO, GD 112/43/5/7, "Narrative of proceedings in the Glasgow Assembly 1638," fo. 1r.

⁶⁴ D.E.R. Watt, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ Medii Aevi ad annum 1638*, 2nd draft (St Andrews, 1969), 309.

⁶⁵ RBLJ, i, 149. It is he who was reported to have said that "the author of the practiche of pietie war damned in hell for he haid maid all the ladyes in Scotland puritanes." Perhaps drunkenness in his case might be taken seriously. SRO, GD 112/43/5/7, "Narrative of the proceedings in the Glasgow Assembly 1638," fo. 1r; *The declinatour and protestation of the some some-times pretended bishops ... refuted* (Edinburgh, 1639), 91; "Process against Dr Alexander Gledstanes, before the presbytery of St Andrews," in R. Wodrow, *Collections upon the Lives of the Reformers and most eminent Ministers of the Church of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1834-45), I, 395-402 (the quotation is on 398). The book in question is the immensely popular and much reprinted *Practice of piety* by Lewis Bayly, bishop of Bangor. It went through twenty-five different printings by 1630, in English alone; it continued to be reprinted in its original language and was also translated. A. Lang, *Puritanismus und Pietismus: Studien zu ihrer Entwicklung von M. Butzer bis zum Methodismus* (Darmstadt, 1972), 187.

⁶⁶ RKS, 260.

⁶⁷ RBLJ, i, 148-9. For Panter's poetry, see his *Valliados libri tres* (Edinburgh, 1633) and *Metamorphoseon quae in sancta scriptura extant* (London, 1651).

the Antichryst into Mahumed,"⁶⁸ presumably exculpating the pope in so doing. From England in 1650 he would express his opinion on the necessity of infant baptism, its want exposing the child to loss of salvation.⁶⁹

John Crichton was guilty of about forty-eight points of Arminianism and Popery, and the usual scandalous life. Although his career at Paisley began in 1629 with "applause and approbation," a worrisome theological tendency was recognised at least as early as 1634 when he was reported as having taught the possibility of falling away from justifying faith. If the later presbytery report on him can be trusted, it would seem that Crichton's reading had led him far away from reformed theology.⁷⁰ He was alleged to have stated that the commandments could be kept, for otherwise God would be the author of sin, and in fact, works were essential to salvation: "Whosoever dare say ... that God ever elected or rejected any man without respect to works, I say that is a fable, not worthy to be heard in the chair of veritie." He taught the universality of grace and redemption: "Christ died for all – for Judas and Peter." Later he condemned supralapsarian predestination as having been "hatched in hell, and worthy to be delete out of God's Word." He also spoke of the reconciliation of Roman Catholics and Protestants, their differences being "but a mouthful of moonshine;" he maintained a number of catholic points of ancient practice including prayers for the dead; he replaced the communion table with an altar and rail; he defended observance of Christmas as bearing apostolic authority, "and by the iniquitie of the time

⁶⁸ SRO, GD 112/43/5/7, "Narrative of the proceedings in the Glasgow Assembly 1638," fo. 1r.

⁶⁹ *A relation of a dispute of baptisme of infants of Christians. At Holgate in the County of Salop, Maii. 30. 1650. Betwixt P. Panter D. in Divinitie, rector of the place, and Mr. Brown, preacher to the Anabaptists in that circuit* (London, 1650), 9, 14.

⁷⁰ *RBLJ*, i, 172-3.

forgotten”⁷¹ If all charges are to be believed, here was a Scottish John Cosin. The allegations also included drunkenness and violence, whose predictability might serve to undermine confidence in them.

James Auckenleck [Affleck, Fleck], minister of Kettins (Meigle presbytery), was subjected to a further investigation. He denied defending the doctrine of universal grace as an integral part of an Arminian theology; he intimated only that its inclusion in Lutheran doctrine gave it some kind of legitimacy. He admitted appealing to John 2:1 and 2 Peter 2, “but I was never of that opinion that *Christus mortuus est pro singulis*.” The next day he was told to go home and approach his kirk and presbytery “and satisfie them in alse solemn a manner as can be,”⁷² which meant subscription of the acts of the synod of Dort.⁷³ Apparently he was successful and was restored.⁷⁴

John McMath of Simprin (Chimside presbytery) received similar treatment, which Baillie thought the outcome of consorting with the likes of [George] Sydserff, [William] Maxwell (on both of whom, see below), and the renegade Robert Menteith.⁷⁵ Francis Hervie of Yetholm (Kelso presbytery) had constructed an altar; Gordon put him down for an Arminian, as he did Andrew Lamont of Markinch (Kirkcaldy presbytery).⁷⁶ William Annand of Ayr (Ayr presbytery), a supporter of the 1637 liturgy, had defended saints’ days “and many poynts of erroneous doctrine,” particularly in one infamous sermon addressed to

⁷¹ RKS, 163; J.C. Lees, *The Abbey of Paisley* (Paisley, 1878), 284, 288-93; Gordon, *History*, ii, 57-8; W.R. Foster, “The operation of presbyteries in Scotland, 1600-1638,” *ante*, 15 (1966), 24; G.D. Henderson, “Arminianism in Scotland,” 495; NLS, Wodrow MSS., octavo ix, no. 4, “The progresse of and the admission of Mr John Crichton to Ministerie of Pasley,” fo. 13r.

⁷² RKS, 165, 183.

⁷³ RBLJ, i, 172.

⁷⁴ *Fasti*, v, 309.

⁷⁵ RBLJ, i, 164. RKS, 172 notes that a John McNaught, supposedly of Chimside, was deposed for, *inter alia*, preaching Arminianism. This “ghost” does not appear in *Fasti*, ii, 33, where Alexander Smith appears as minister at Chimside from 1607-1649. It seems, however, that “McNaught” should read “McMath,” who was at least in Chimside presbytery. Baillie wrote of McMath in the company of Hervie and Forrester, while RKS has McNaught with the other two.

⁷⁶ RKS, 260; RBLJ, i, 164; Gordon, *History*, ii, 143.

the synod at Glasgow in 1637.⁷⁷ Henry Scrymgeor of Forgan (St Andrews presbytery) was delated “for venting of sundrie tenets of false doctrine,” including the necessity of baptism, presumably for regeneration.⁷⁸ James Forsyth, formerly a regent at Glasgow⁷⁹ and subsequently minister of Kilpatrick (Dunbarton presbytery), had fallen recently into Arminianism and refused to be drawn back.⁸⁰ Baillie noted that Forsyth’s friends John Rae and Patrick Maxwell, both regents at the University of Glasgow,⁸¹ tended in a similar direction; likewise another of that group, the vehement anti-covenanter John Corbet of Bonhill (Dunbarton presbytery), whom he had once thought “the far more modest among them.”⁸² Thomas Forrester, minister at Melrose (Selkirk presbytery), had committed a great variety of objectionable acts such as converting the old communion table, superseded by an altar of his own handiwork, into a wagon to carry peat; his copious doctrinal errors included “Christ’s universal redemption.”⁸³ Presumably he was very much like Crichton, though the minister of Paisley was not known to be a cartwright.

By 1639 the trail was growing rather faint, and there was little left for that assembly to do. Robert Hamilton of Lesmahago (Lanark

⁷⁷ RKS, 180; RBLJ, i, 20, 62, 167. He seems to have attempted to redeem himself some months before the assembly, but succeeded only in having himself called Proteus. Baillie mentioned his defence of saints’ days, but the word “Arminianism” does not appear beside his name.

⁷⁸ RKS, 182; RBLJ, i, 168.

⁷⁹ *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis*, 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1854), i, 251; iii, 378.

⁸⁰ RBLJ, i, 162; Gordon, *History*, ii, 137.

⁸¹ J. Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation in 1451 to 1909* (Glasgow, 1909), 101, 113; *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis*, i, 215 has Rae professor of Greek in 1625. On both men see *ibid.*, i, 256-7, 266; iii, 379; also RBLJ, ii, 428, no. 124.

⁸² Corbet was deposed in April 1639. He went to Ireland where he was murdered in 1641. See *The Party-Coloured Mind*, ed. D. Reid (Edinburgh, 1982), 64-69. See also RBLJ, i, 189.

⁸³ RBLJ, i, 164-5; Gordon, *History*, ii, 144.

presbytery) was accused of having preached Arminianism, namely universal grace. He seems to have been a man of unstable opinions and did poorly in his attempt to satisfy the assembly of his change of heart. Despite his readiness to subscribe the canons of Dort he was referred to the synod of Glasgow.⁸⁴ At the same assembly Robert Rollock of Murroes (Dundee presbytery), was deposed for, *inter alia*, “maintaining the universalitie of Christs merits, and the falling away of the Saints.”⁸⁵ His contempt for the witnesses did him no good, and his claim of private rather than public articulation of the erroneous points availed nothing against the sentence of deposition. His revenge was writing a rather mild pamphlet in favour of episcopacy which he published from a presently safe haven across the border.⁸⁶ Baillie reported that in 1638 William Maxwell of Dunbar and George Sydserff of Cockburnspath (both of Dunbar presbytery) were up “for very corrupt doctrine.”⁸⁷ Maxwell’s name was on the list again in 1639 when he was accused of “foule errorrs in his doctrine,” including the potential for falling away from grace, if Gordon can be followed,⁸⁸ although there is a record that he was deposed on 3 January for “Arminian doctrin and contempt of the presbytrie.”⁸⁹ Patrick Lindsay of Maxton (Selkirk presbytery) was cited for false doctrine: “his proces is very fearfull, for its all grosse Poperie and Arminianisme – yea, there

⁸⁴ RKS, 257, 261, 263.

⁸⁵ RKS, 259. Another account says that a Mr. Harie Rollok was brought before the assembly where he showed his contempt for it, and his belief that “it was a bass thing for kinges to subject themselves to be reullit by the word of god.” SRO, GD 112/43/5/7, “Narrative of proceedings in the Glasgow Assembly 1638,” fo. 1r. “Harry” should probably be “Robert.”

⁸⁶ R.R., *Episcopal government instituted by Christ* (London, 1641). Of presbyterian polity he wrote: “I condemne not the Churches, but the Government,” 34.

⁸⁷ RBLJ, i, 150. See also NLS, Wodrow MSS, octavo x, “Robert Douglas account”, fo. 115r.

⁸⁸ RKS, 260 (incorrectly calling him George); Gordon, *History*, ii, 50; Scott, *Fasti*, i, 407.

⁸⁹ NLS, Wodrow MSS., octavo x, “Robert Douglas account”, fo. 115r.

is not a poynt of Arminian doctrine or Poperie but he hes mentained it in the grossest way.”⁹⁰

Writing to his cousin William Spang in the Netherlands shortly after the Glasgow assembly concluded, Robert Baillie wrote:

The way of our partie is avowedly to full Arminianisme, and really to so much Poperie as the Pope requires at their hands for the present, yea much more; it hes been proven at our Synod that numbers of our brethren hes preached the most of the Canterburian tenets.⁹¹

Henderson expressed a similar view, deploring the apparent fact that “so many ministers were procest for armenianisme.”⁹² Just how great was the threat?

In addition to the generality of the episcopate, of which five or six bishops in particular, there were approximately two dozen accusations of Arminianism or some facsimile thereof; plus there was a group which departed the country rather than remain behind under the covenanting dispensation. Allen Birchler compiled a list of ministers in the years 1637-8 and ascertained that of the 870 who served at that time, fifty, or six per cent, “are definitely known to have supported the royal policy.”⁹³ It is not inconceivable that some of these were also inclined toward theological innovation and escaped having their names read into the record by their flight.

Even if our listed ministers were all guilty as charged, and we were to extend the list by a few names,⁹⁴ one is not struck by a massive,

⁹⁰ *RKS*, 260.

⁹¹ *RBLJ*, i, 113.

⁹² SRO, GD 112/43/5/6, “Narrative of proceedings in the the Glasgow Assembly 1638,” fo. 2r.

⁹³ A.B. Birchler, “The Influence of the Scottish Clergy on Politics, 1616-38” (Ph.D. thesis, Nebraska, 1966), 138.

⁹⁴ One that I have omitted, but might have been included, is John Lindsay, minister from 1621 at Carstairs in Lanark presbytery. He graduated in 1614 from Glasgow. Rothes accused him in 1639 of heretical doctrine and being “a maine

“systemic,” infection. Some of the aforementioned cases lack any appreciable substance, and one cannot help but doubt the justice of some of the charges of Arminian doctrine. Elsewhere I have demonstrated that the published sermons and treatises of Scottish ministers and divines at this time do not support Baillie’s agitation after the Glasgow assembly, which was quite different from his attitude as late as 1637.⁹⁵

There is yet another complicating factor because we know of some who could not agree with the covenant, but who were otherwise more or less unobjectionable. These include George Wishart of St Andrews. He had deserted his charge, and would eventually reappear in Scotland in the company of Montrose, yet the vigilant Baillie wrote that Wishart’s people, while upset at his flight, “*seemed content enough with the man’s life and doctrine.*”⁹⁶ The same point may be underlined using the broader perspective of the presbytery of Edinburgh. The Old Kirk lost both of its ministers, David Mitchell and David Fletcher. At St Giles, both the dean, James Hannay, and Alexander Thomson were deposed on 1 January 1639 by the presbytery. James Elliot of Trinity escaped his troubles by going to England in 1640. The presbytery deposed John Watson of the Canongate in 1639 for desertion; likewise William Ogston of Colinton, a former professor of moral philosophy (1619-1635) at Marischal College, Aberdeen, who had been presented by William Forbes; we have already noted his alleged theological faults. At South Leith William Wishart was deposed in June 1639 and subsequently banished to England;⁹⁷ his colleague William Morton disappeared and turned up in England.⁹⁸

incendiarie and enemie to the worke of reformation in this land” (RKS, 256). He fled to Ireland, “being over shott in debt,” but returned and was restored later in 1639 (*Fasti*, iii, 292-293). Baillie remarked upon him briefly several times, without mentioning erroneous doctrine (RBLJ, i, 21, 66, 170, 245).

⁹⁵ See n.2.

⁹⁶ RBLJ, i, 151; emphasis added.

⁹⁷ See W. Wishart, *Immanuel: or the mistery of God, manifested in the flesh* (London, 1642), where the title-page describes him as “Scoto-Britan and Preacher in both Kingdoms.”

⁹⁸ RKS, 260; RBLJ, i, 149-50; *Fasti*, i, 161-2, 165-6; D.L. Robertson, *South Leith Records* (Edinburgh, 1911), 29.

Mitchell we know; his unorthodoxy seems clear enough. However, the doctrinal failings of the others, like Ogston, are by no means to be accepted without hesitation. Fletcher, though deposed, was readmitted later in 1639 upon confession of his wrongs – doctrine and life not among them – and went to Melrose.⁹⁹ Of the processes against Edinburgh ministers after the Glasgow assembly, that of William Wishart has survived in detail.¹⁰⁰ He was accused of many shortcomings, beginning with some unsettling statement he made in the pulpit about Rome being “the true kirk of God.” This elicited a substantial, point by point response in the record. He also was guilty of political crimes in that he attacked the covenant, calling it “a seditious and treacherous combination;” the record replied that it was orthodox and that his view was *heterodox*, or at the very least, schismatic. Of briefer report were the softness of his voice, eccentricities in his ministerial practice, wearing of “a crucifix ingraven on his hand,”¹⁰¹ excessive frequenting of taverns – even before service – and something like autocratic rule: “His whole conversation for the most part is rather like a pope.” Not a mention of Arminianism; not an allusion to popish rites in his worship. Fortunately, Wishart left behind a couple of printed works, and of particular interest are his sermons on the Lord’s prayer, preached in Leith. Unless he had since abandoned the doctrine he published in 1633, he was a thorough Augustinian in the doctrine of grace, a reputable anti-papist, and a typically introspective and pious puritan.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ RKS, 257, 261.

¹⁰⁰ NLS, Wodrow MSS, quarto cvi, “Edinburgh presbytery against Wm. Wishart,” fos. 158v-164r.

¹⁰¹ He condemned from his pulpit the Catholic practice of wearing a cross around the neck, “and yet behold thou art the enemy of the Cross of Jesus.” W. Wishart, *An exposition of the Lords prayer. Delivered in two and twenty lectures. At the church of Leith in Scotland* (London, 1633), 160-1; also 285.

¹⁰² Wishart, *Exposition*; see 16, 111-115, 141-150, 282-3. He did refer to “our neighbour Church in Rome,” 341-2, but also contrasted Rome with “us of the true and pure Church.”

So while the historian of this period must be interested in any minister who fell out with the kirk in 1638 or thereabouts, one must also be rather cautious about assuming the reasons for the estrangement. Acceptance of the Prayer Book is by no means to be accepted as presumptive evidence of repudiation of predestinarian doctrine. Nor was James Elliot accused of doctrinal faults. He had not signed the King's Covenant and he was not close to the bishops; at worst he had read the service book liturgy in a diocesan gathering. When Henderson pressed for a statement as to the reason for the desire to depose him, "no uther answer could be givine bot that they thocht him a man not fullie qualified for so eminent a place, the moderator replying if it was soe, what was the reassone they maid choys of hime at first." It seems that Elliot was caught up in parochial politics, in that he had been advanced by Sir John Hay to the resentment of the people.¹⁰³

It is thus more than a little difficult to ascertain how much hard fact lies enmeshed in the emotional religious rhetoric of 1638. Certainly one would not expect that the Covenanters missed any candidates for theological examination and censure among ministers remaining in Scotland; the greater likelihood, as we have observed already, was that men should be accused on flimsy evidence. Never the less, even if the numbers were small, the distribution of those numbers may hint at a real danger, a conspiracy perhaps, as Henderson actually claimed:

I know there is ane uther proces against some uthers in Schooles of Divinitie that hes the same poyntes, and uthers preachours lykewayes, and it would seeme to have beene done of purpose, and that *they are all joyned in ane combination together* for venting such poyntes of doctrine; for there is come doune some poyntes from England, which were holdin to be the tenets of a great learned man, and thir preachers seemes to be his schollers.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ SRO, GD 112/43/5/7, "Narrative of proceedings in the Glasgow Assembly 1638," sig. 2v; *RBLJ*, i, 150.

¹⁰⁴ *RKS*, 155. Emphasis added.

In order to understand the forces at work, it may prove useful to investigate the backgrounds of the accused to see whether there were any common elements. Among the bishops, James Wedderburn graduated from St Andrews in 1608 and then went to England where he furthered his studies and served for a time in a parish. He taught at St Andrews from 1617 to 1626. Thomas Sydserff was an Edinburgh graduate (1602); in 1609 he was a student at Heidelberg.¹⁰⁵ While much less is known of his European experiences than of his contemporary William Forbes (born in 1585, four years later than Sydserff), his studies there may have served a similar function, an introduction to other currents of Christian thought. John Maxwell was a graduate of St Andrews (1611), following three years after Wedderburn.¹⁰⁶ David Lindsay graduated from St Andrews in 1593.¹⁰⁷ James Fairley graduated from the University of Edinburgh, where he was the anti-Arminian faction's (including William Struther, Henry Rollock, and Andrew Ramsay) successful candidate for the chair of divinity in 1629, winning the post over the curious Robert Menteith put forward by Thomas Sydserff and David Mitchell.¹⁰⁸

Of the twenty-one other men we have mentioned as charged with doctrinal error,¹⁰⁹ there was one graduate from King's College, William Annand in 1608. Five graduated from Glasgow including John Corbet, 1623; James Forsyth, 1624 or 1625;¹¹⁰ William Maxwell, 1626; and the two regents John Rae, 1618 and Patrick Maxwell, 1626. Patrick appears to have been William's brother, perhaps even twin, given their

¹⁰⁵ *Fasti*, vii, 353-4; T.A. Fischer, *The Scots in Germany* (Edinburgh, 1973 [repr. of 1902 edn.]), 314; W.C. Taylor, "Scottish students in Heidelberg, 1386-1662," *Scottish Historical Review*, v (1908), 73.

¹⁰⁶ *Fasti*, vii, 355-6.

¹⁰⁷ *Fasti*, vii, 341-2.

¹⁰⁸ *Fasti*, i, 329; vii, 333; T. Craufurd, *History of the University of Edinburgh from 1580 to 1646* (Edinburgh, 1808), 115.

¹⁰⁹ The information presented is taken from *Fasti*. It has been conveniently summarized in tabular form by Birchler, "Influence of the Scottish Clergy", 282ff.

¹¹⁰ *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis*, iii, 15, 16.

graduation in the same year.¹¹¹ There were two from Edinburgh: George Sydserf, 1616 and John McMath, 1619. It is hard to draw conclusions here. But thirteen of our twenty-one were graduates of St Andrews: Thomas Forrester, Alexander Gledstanes and Andrew Lamont (1608); James Auckenleck and Robert Rollock (1609); David Mitchell (1612); Patrick Panter (1617); Francis Hervie and John Crichton (1619); Henry Scrymgeor (1620); Robert Hamilton of Lesmahago (1623);¹¹² Patrick Lindsay (1627). The date of John Peter's graduation is unknown; he is listed as a student of St Salvator's College in 1617-1618.¹¹³

The St Andrews connection was recognised at the time – the assembly was memorialised by the town for provision for its ministry, “in respect of their corrupt Universities, and the dangerous fruites that a corrupt Ministry had brought foorth amongst them.” It was also noted that Robert Hamilton of Lesmahago had been Wedderburn's student;¹¹⁴ Baillie said that Wedderburn “had been a speciall instrument of all our mischiefs, having corrupted with Arminianisme diverse with his discourses and lectures in St Andrewes; whose errors and perversness kythes this day in all the nooks of the kingdome...”¹¹⁵ Gordon was no less forthcoming about the bishop of Dunblane's nefarious influence:

he praised the wryttings of papistes and Arminians, and recommended them to his hearers above all others, wherby he did infect them with all the Arminian errors, and not a few

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, iii, 13, 17. On 76 we read: *Gulielmus Maxuell Patricius Maxuall fratres.*

¹¹² *Fasti*, iii, 313 has him a graduate of Glasgow, but RKS, 182 places him at St Andrews.

¹¹³ University of St Andrews Muniments, MS. UY.305.3, fo. 161. I owe this reference to the kind efforts of Mr Robert N. Smart, Keeper of the Muniments.

¹¹⁴ RKS, 182. See also W. Row's *Supplement to Blair's Life in The Life of Mr. Robert Blair*, ed. T. M'Crie (Edinburgh, 1848), 156. I incorrectly identified this student as Alexander Sommerville in *Episcopacy in Scotland*, 189.

¹¹⁵ *RBLJ*, i, 167.

popish errors also, wherby many pairtes of the kyngdome wer infected, and felt the evill: . . . ¹¹⁶

Hamilton was not the only St Andrews graduate to have studied there during Wedderburn's tenure, i.e., 1617-1626.¹¹⁷ Crichton, perhaps the most notorious Arminian of 1638 after the professor himself, was there for two years under Wedderburn, as was Hervie; Scrymgeor for three years; Lindsay for about two. Gledstanes was his exact contemporary as a student, and Auckenleck was but one year behind. If Wedderburn stayed on after 1608 as a regent, which was not unlikely, he might have taught David Mitchell and less probably Patrick Panter. Peter fits in here somewhere, but we cannot be any more precise. Surely, however, there must be more to the story than just Wedderburn. Calderwood wrote that Wedderburn was joined with Principal Howie and a Dr Melvine in instituting the English service in New College in 1623, "where all students were present at morning and evening prayers," on the kings instructions,¹¹⁸ though, of course, there were undoubtedly a great many English parsons who used the English Book of Common Prayer who never entertained an Arminian thought in their lives. We must remember that the Church of England was a predominantly Calvinist institution in this period. Also, two further considerations must not be forgotten. One is that while St Andrews supplied 34% of supporters of royal policy in 1637-8, it also provided 31% of opponents. The second significant fact is very simply that the school which graduated Wedderburn, Panter, and Crichton also educated Henderson (1603, though he was originally a conformist) and George Gillespie (1629). So while we are cautioned against any facile

¹¹⁶ Gordon, *History*, ii, 137.

¹¹⁷ *Fasti*, vii, 338; *DNB*.

¹¹⁸ *DCH*, vii, 569. J.K. Cameron, *Letters of John Johnston c.1565-1611 and Robert Howie c.1565-c.1645* (Edinburgh, 1963), p. lxxiii suggests that Howie's enthusiasm for episcopacy, which ended in his signing the covenant in 1638, had begun its decline by 1624. One might surmise a connection. See also *Selections from Wodrow's Biographical Collections: Divines of the North-East of Scotland*, ed. R. Lippe (Aberdeen, 1890), 239-240.

connection of Arminianism in its broadest sense with St Andrews, the relationship does bear some attention and may serve to divert the historical spotlight away from Aberdeen. If any Scottish university was the nursery of Arminianism, it was St Andrews. Unfortunately, the historian is denied further opportunity to test the hypothesis as the documentary record relating even generally to this period of the university's life is seriously impoverished. We have little more than Wedderburn's notebook and Baillie's diligent quotation of its popish passages, and that other focal point of interest Patrick Panter has been survived only by his poetry, a couple of printed treatises from his time in England, and a few manuscript pages that really tell us very little.¹¹⁹

However, education in the formal sense was not the only factor involved. Young men could be influenced by the examples of other ministers. On the presbyterian side, Robert Blair touched the lives of Robert Baillie and John Livingstone; Alexander Henderson was swayed by William Scot and Robert Bruce.¹²⁰ A similiar process may be attributed to the other party, and presbyterian allegations of the possibility of preferment to those who migrated into the Arminian, Canterburyan, or prelatical camp may not be without force.¹²¹ There also remained the possibility that some who dabbled in new theological trends simply pursued their own reading lists and drew their own conclusions, in either direction. The libraries of Scottish universities contained a wide range of authors ancient and modern;¹²² there was no

¹¹⁹ University of St Andrews Muniments, Typ BE.C33HB. Panter found his way to the parish of Holgate in Shropshire where he did battle with sectaries. See his *De non temerandis ecclesiis* (London, 1650) and *A relation of a dispute of baptisme of infants of Christians*.

¹²⁰ R. Baillie, *An historicall vindication of the government of the Church of Scotland* (London, 1646), sig. A2r; *Select Biographies*, i, 132; H. Guthry, *The Memoirs* (Glasgow, 1748), 24; *Life of Robert Blair*, 14; *A Brief Historical Relation of the Life of Mr John Livingstone*, new edn., ed. T. Houston (Edinburgh, 1848), 75.

¹²¹ New College, CHU 12, Wodrow MSS, folio X, "The historie of church and state of Scotland," 6. Another transcript is in NLS, Advocates MSS. 34.5.9, Book I, p. 1.

¹²² See, e.g., EUL, MS. Da.1.29; Glasgow University Archives, MS. 26624, which included *Armini opera* and *Apologia remonstrantium* among titles which William

obvious attempt at censorship. Wodrow told the story of George Hutcheson, who graduated from Edinburgh in 1638. David Dickson was reported to have said that Hutcheson was “the worst to deal with” in his youthful attachment to Arminianism. He advocated it with energy and intelligence, but thereafter saw the predestinarian light and in later years said

that error of the Arminians was so pleasant and taking to corrupt nature, that if a man had a good measure, with his strong naturall witt and reason, nothing would turn that man from that dreadfull error but the true grace of God.¹²³

One would like to know more about such people, and about those delated for error in 1638.

In conclusion, while the presence of Arminianism was rather weak at that time and indeed could hardly be expected to be otherwise given the theological history of the reformed kirk, the St Andrews connection may be taken for evidence for what might have been over a lengthier period. Presbyterian fears were not without foundation, but for a general defection to have occurred a fundamental shift in the theological norms of the country would have been required. At 1638 that shift had scarcely begun; despite the sometimes frantic rhetoric, the battle for theological orthodoxy was far from lost.

Spang sent in 1632. I am grateful to Dr Christine Shepherd of the Open University for her help with references.

¹²³ R. Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-1843), iii, 12-13; see also i. 29.